

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

US MISSION USUN NY 2749

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 13377

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: LEBANESE REACTIONS TO RABAT

1. DISCUSSIONS OF RABAT SUMMIT MEETING WITH FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER FUAD NAFFA AND PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER BOUTROS DIB INDICATE THE FOLLOWING LEBANESE OPINIONS AND/OR REACTIONS.

2. CONCLUSIONS OF THE SUMMIT WERE DEFINITELY A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION IN THAT ALTHOUGH THERE WAS BITTER AND ANGRY DISCUSSION BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTERS AND AT THE OUTSET BETWEEN CHIEFS OF STATE, MEETING ENDED WITH NOTE OF HARMONY AND UNITY THAT WAS QUITE SURPRISING. THE QUESTION OF WHO REPRESENTS THE PALESTINIANS IS NOW AT LAST DEFINITELY SOLVED AND ONE OF THE HERETOFORE UNKNOWN IN THE EQUATION IS NOW A KNOWN.

3. THE INDIVIDUAL WHO EMERGED FROM RABAT WITH ENHANCED POSITION AS A LEADER IS PRESIDENT ASAD OF SYRIA. HAVING
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HELD THE USG AT ARMS LENGTH, HE WAS LESS COMMITTED THAN SADAT,

AND COULD MANOEUVER MORE FREELY. HIS MANOEUVERING WAS CONSTRUCTIVE AND HE WAS A MODERATING ELEMENT PARTICULARLY IN THE CORRIDOR DISCUSSIONS.

4. CONVERSELY, BOTH NAFFA AND DIB BELIEVED THAT SADAT'S IMAGE WAS SLIGHTLY TARNISHED AND HE WAS NOT THE GLAMOROUS STAR THAT HE HAD BEEN AT PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF THIS NATURE. THEY ATTRIBUTE THIS TO THE FACT THAT HAVING ARDENTLY ESPOUSED OUR POSITION, THE USG HAS NOT BEEN AS FORTH-COMING AS HOPED IN SUPPORTING HIM PRINCIPALLY IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD.

5. WHILE RELATIVELY SPEAKING THERE WAS NO BOMBAST AGAINST THE USG, BOTH LEBANESE OBSERVERS INDICATED THEY THEY RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE MAJORITY OF ARAB LEADERS FELT WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE FORTHCOMING IN OUR SUPPORT OF SADAT.

6. LIBYA, REPRESENTED BY ITS AMBASSADOR IN PARIS, WAS NOT, ACCORDING TO NAFFA, TROUBLESOME. FACT THAT LIBYA WAS PRESENT WAS A VICTORY FOR ARAB UNITY AND HE ATTRIBUTED IT TO STRONG ARAFAT PRESSURE ON QADHAFI TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE.

7. WHILE NEVER MENTIONED PUBLICLY, THE QUESTION OF PERSONAL SECURITY UNDERLAY MUCH OF THE CONFERENCE. NAFFA STATED HIS IMPRESSION THAT BOTH KING FEISAL AND GULF REPRESENTATIVES FEARED, PRHAPS SUBCONSCIOUSLY, THAT IF THEY WERE NOT RPT NOT TO SUPPORT THE PLO POSITION 100 PER CENT, THAT THEIR REGIMES MIGHT BE THE OBJECT OF PALESTINIAN TERRORISM. THE PLOT AGAINST ARAB LEADERS WAS, OF COURSE, KNOWN TO EVERYONE BUT MANY TRANSLATED THIS THREAT AS AFFECTING THEIR HOMELAND.

8. SADDAM HUSSEIN, THE IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT, PERSONALLY APPEARED MODERATE TO NAFFA. NAFFA DESCRIBED HIM AS NOT HAVING CHANGED HIS BASIC POSITION BUT HIS APPARENT ATTITUDE WAS MUCH MORE CONSTRUCTIVE THAN AT PREVIOUS GET-TOGETHERS. HIS BASIC INTRANSIGENCE WAS REVEALED, HOWEVER, WHEN WITH FORCE, HE INDICATED THAT IF THE PLO GOES TO GENEVA, IRAQ WILL WITHDRAW ITS RECOGNITION OF THAT ORGANIZATION.

9. KING HASSAN HANDLED HIMSELF VERY WELL. ALTHOUGH SLIGHTLY POMPOUS AND PROTOCOLAIRE, HE NEVERTHELESS TOOK EVERY CONFIDENTIAL

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OPPORTUNITY TO REDUCE DIFFERENCES AND TO BRING ABOUT COMPROMISE. HE WAS UNQUESTIONABLY A VERY CONSTRUCTIVE AND MODERATE ELEMENT.

10. NAFFA OPINED THAT KING HUSSEIN PROBABLY CAME OUT OF THE SUMMIT WITH MORE DIGNITY THAN ANY OTHER INDIVIDUAL PRESENT. HE SHOWED HIMSELF TO BE A STATESMAN AND THE WAY IN WHICH HE TOOK HIS DEFEAT WAS AN INSPIRATION. DIB CONCURRED POINTING OUT THAT HUSSEIN IS IN A MUCH STRONGER POSITION IN THE ARAB CAMP

TODAY THAN BEFORE THE SUMMIT AND HE MAY NOT BE AT ALL CHAGRINED
TO LET OTHERS NOW TRY TO SOLVE THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEMS.
ALTHOUGH AT THE OUTSET OF THE CHIEF OF STATE SESSIONS,
ARAFAT WAS HARDLY CIVIL TO THE JORDANIAN MONARCH, AT THE END
HE ADDRESSED HIM AS "MY BROTHER, THE KING" AND IT WAS APPARENT
THAT AT LEAST AS FAR AS ARAFAT PERSONALLY WAS CONCERNED,
THE HATCHET WAS BURIED.

11. AS AN INDICATION OF THE BITTERNESS REIGNING AT THE
OUTSET OF THE HEAD OF STATES MEETING AND ASAD'S CONSTRUCTIVE
ROLE, DIB MENTIONED A VIOLENT ATTACK BY ARAFAT AGAINST
HUSSEIN AS THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SEPTEMBER 1970
MASSACRES. ASAD INTERVENED STRONGLY, POINTING OUT THAT NOT
ONLY HE, ASAD, BUT ALL OTHER ARAB LEADERS PRESENT BORE A
SHARE OF THIS RESPONSIBILITY AND ONLY BY UNIFYING NOW COULD THEY
ABSOLVE THEMSELVES OF THEIR SHARE.
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